(c) the results achieved by the Institute during the last three years, year-wise;

(d) whether Government propose to increase the number of such institutes in the State; and

(e) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Southern Region Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute at Garladinne, District Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh has been functioning since 1983 with the objectives of imparting training to the nominees of the Governments/ Organisations/Institutions, technicians, rural youth and farmers in the selection, operation, repair and management of agricultural equipment and providing services relating to testing and evaluation of agricultural implements and machines for assessing their performance characteristics etc.

(c) The achievements made by the Institute during last three years are as under :

Year	Persons Trained. (No.)	Machines Tested. (No.)
1998-1999	707	10
1999-2000	776	08
2000-2001	908	05

(d) and (e) There is no such proposal at present. The services and other facilities being provided by the Institute are considered adequate to meet the requirements of the State.

Suspension of recovery of farmers loans

4294. SHRI K. M. KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that financial condition of farmers in many States has gone from bad to worse due to drought situation;

(b) whether Government would suspend recovery of loans from farmers in view thereof and instruct the bank authorities and financial institutions to provide interest free loans to farmers, to face the drought situation; and

(c) if so, by when these instructions in this regard would be issued by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) Occurrences of drought do affect crops and the economic condition of the farmers.

(b) and (c) In the case of crop failure due to natural calamities like drought, there are in-built provisions in the credit system to reschedule the loans so as to make the farmers eligible for fresh loans for the next crop season. The Government of India has also introduced the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme to compensate the farmers in case of damage to crops on account of natural calamities. There is, however, no scheme under operation which provides for interest free loans to the farmers due to occurrence of natural calamities.

Decline in the cultivated area

4295. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that all India production of foodgrains was lower by 12.8 million MT during the last financial year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the fresh steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to check the trend of sharp decline in the cultivated area all over the country, especially in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) The All.-India production of foodgrains during agriculture year 2000-2001 is expected to be lower by 12.8 million tonnes compared to that of the preceding year.

(b) The performance of agriculture sector is highly correlated with performance of monsoon as about 38 per cent of net area sown is irrigated and the remaining 62 per cent depends on rainfall. The overall rainfall during monsoon 2000 was deficient by 8 per cent which was accentuated during the subsequent seasons. The western parts of India especially Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya